



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

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State Fire Marshal: 'Change the Batteries' During Nov. 3 Time Change *Good time to brush up on winter-time fire prevention tips, too*

Frankfort, Ky. (Oct. 29, 2013) – The Kentucky State Fire Marshal is reminding Kentuckians of two things this upcoming weekend: When you change your clocks back to standard time, change the batteries in each of your home's smoke alarms; and, ensure that your home heating appliances are in safe working order.

Smoke Detectors

"Early warning is the first line of defense in escaping a fire," said William Swope, director of the Public Protection Cabinet's Division of Fire Prevention and the state's fire marshal. "Without a working smoke detector to issue an early warning, occupants can become trapped by deadly smoke and heat as the fire spreads quickly throughout a home, blocking escape routes."

Smoke detectors should be on every floor of your home, including the basement and in each sleeping area. "The bottom line is smoke detectors can save the lives of your family and pets," said Swope. "It's simple: When you set your clocks back, change the batteries in your smoke alarms."

Home Heating

Because this week's forecast calls for mild temperatures, Swope says that now is also the time to check your home heating appliances or schedule an inspection with a professional.

“According to national statistics, heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires during the winter months. In fact, half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February,” said Swope.

“The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) estimates that heating equipment was involved in about 57,100 reported home structure fires in 2010, which resulted in 490 civilian deaths, 1,530 injuries and cost more than \$1.1 billion in property damage.

“It’s never too early to prepare for winter,” said Swope. “Follow NFPA’s checklist for a safe cold weather season.”

Check these 10 tips off your list for a safe heating season:

- ✓ Our furnace has been inspected and serviced
- ✓ Our chimneys and vents have been cleaned and inspected.
- ✓ Our wood for our fireplace and wood stove is dry, seasoned wood.
- ✓ Our fireplace screen is metal or heat-tempered glass, in good condition and secure in its position in front of the fireplace.
- ✓ We have a covered metal container ready to use to dispose of cooled ashes.
- ✓ Our children know to stay at least 3 feet away from the fireplace, wood/pellet stove, oil stove or other space heaters.
- ✓ Our portable space heaters have an automatic shut-off.
- ✓ Our portable space heaters will be plugged directly into an outlet and placed at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, like bedding, paper, walls and people.
- ✓ We have tested our smoke alarms and made sure they are working.
- ✓ We have tested our carbon monoxide alarms and made sure they are working.

Swope said education is the key to preventing fires in your home. “Make sure that everyone in your home knows about fire prevention and what to do in case of a fire in your residence,” he said. “And pay particular attention to family members with disabilities to ensure everyone escapes a home fire successfully. Have a fire escape plan that includes two ways out for everyone.”

For additional information on fire prevention, visit the National Fire Protection Association website at <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information>. There, you can find fact sheets on several fire prevention topics.

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